

and the hero retires to Germany discomfited in his ambition and a prey to bitter remorse.

Now that there is a large element of autobiography in the external setting of this fantastic story is soon apparent. Horace Grey is clearly a picture of Isaac D'Israeli; Vivian Grey's early years are, as has already been seen, described in great part from the author's own experience ; the journey to Wales to secure Cleveland's adhesion to the Carabas party is obviously suggested by Disraeli's own mission to Scotland to enlist the services of Lockhart for *The Representative* ; and we can trace in the book the influence of nearly every important fact of which we have knowledge in the author's previous history — his father's library, his conversations with literary men at Murray's, his tour in Germany, his intercourse with financial magnates in the City. All this is natural : a man can only write of what he knows, and at twenty-one his experience is so limited that his range of choice is narrow. But a question of greater interest and difficulty remains. Is Vivian Grey's character a reflexion of the author's own ? Is his view of life the view which Benjamin Disraeli had deliberately adopted on the threshold of manhood ? Are his ideals and ambitions Disraeli's youthful ideals and ambitions, and his adventures in some degree an anticipation of Disraeli's own career ? It has generally been assumed that these things are so, and Disraeli's friends, accepting the assumption, have offered the best apology they could, while his enemies have exultantly pointed to the moral. But another theory is possible. A recent critic,¹ while admitting, or rather insisting on, the autobiographic significance of the book, has argued with some plausibility that the story is not an anticipation, but a retrospect ; that it embodies not an ideal, but a confession and a warning ; that the author is drawing from his own past experience in a very literal sense, and is transposing into the form of fiction the story of *The Representative* and the shipwreck of his own precocious ambitions.

¹ Mr. Lucien Wolf in his edition of *Vivian Grey*.